

**State of California  
California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region**

**RESOLUTION NO. 03-XX  
July 10, 2003**

**Amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region to include a TMDL for  
Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects in the Los Angeles River**

**WHEREAS, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region, finds that:**

1. The federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) to develop water quality standards which are sufficient to protect beneficial uses designated for each water body found within its region.
2. The Regional Board carries out its CWA responsibilities through California's Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act and establishes water quality objectives designed to protect beneficial uses contained in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region (Basin Plan).
3. Section 303(d) of the CWA requires states to identify and to prepare a list of water bodies that do not meet water quality standards and then establish load and wasteload allocations, or a total maximum daily load (TMDL), for each water body that will ensure attainment of water quality standards and then to incorporate those allocations into their water quality control plans.
4. The Los Angeles River was listed on California's 1998 section 303(d) list, due to impairment for ammonia, nutrients, and their effects such as odor, scum, toxicity, low dissolved oxygen, pH, and algae that do not protect the most sensitive beneficial uses of the water body.
5. A consent decree between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Heal the Bay, Inc. and BayKeeper, Inc. was approved on March 22, 1999. The court order directs the USEPA to complete TMDLs for all the Los Angeles Region's impaired waters within 13 years.
6. The elements of a TMDL are described in 40 CFR 130.2 and 130.7 and section 303(d) of the CWA, as well as in USEPA guidance documents (e.g., USEPA, 1991). A TMDL is defined as "the sum of the individual wasteload allocations for point sources and load allocations for nonpoint sources and natural background" (40 CFR 130.2). Regulations further stipulate that TMDLs must be set at "levels necessary to attain and maintain the applicable narrative and numeric water quality standards with seasonal variations and a margin of safety that takes into account any lack of knowledge concerning the relationship between effluent limitations and water

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quality” (40 CFR 130.7(c)(1)). The regulations in 40 CFR 130.7 also state that TMDLs shall take into account critical conditions for stream flow, loading and water quality parameters.

7. Upon establishment of TMDLs by the State or USEPA, the State is required to incorporate the TMDLs along with appropriate implementation measures into the State Water Quality Management Plan (40 CFR 130.6(c)(1), 130.7). The Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region (Basin Plan), and applicable statewide plans, serve as the State Water Quality Management Plans governing the watersheds under the jurisdiction of the Regional Board.
8. The Los Angeles River is located in Los Angeles County, California. It reaches from Bell Canyon Creek in the western San Fernando Valley to the Los Angeles Harbor in San Pedro. The proposed TMDL addresses documented water quality impairments by nitrogen compounds and nutrient effects such as algae, odors, and scum.
9. The Regional Board’s goal in establishing the above-mentioned TMDL is to maintain the warm freshwater (WARM) and wildlife (WILD) habitats and attain the water quality objectives established in the Basin Plan for ammonia, nitrite and nitrate, and narrative objectives for biostimulatory substances, color, solid, suspended, or settleable materials, taste and odor, and floating material which applies to nutrients, algae, odor, scum, and foam. Scientific studies have shown the relationship between ammonia and toxicity and nutrients and eutrophication.
10. Regional Board staff have prepared a detailed technical document that analyzes and describes the specific necessity and rationale for the development of this TMDL. The technical document entitled “Total Maximum Daily Loads for Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects Los Angeles River and Tributaries” is an integral part of this Regional Board action and was reviewed, considered, and accepted by the Regional Board before acting. Further, the technical document provides the detailed factual basis and analysis supporting the problem statement, numeric targets (interpretation of the numeric water quality objective, used to calculate the load allocations), source analysis, linkage analysis, wasteload allocations (for point sources), load allocation (for nonpoint sources), margin of safety, and seasonal variations and critical conditions of this TMDL.
11. Interested persons and the public have had reasonable opportunity to participate in review of the amendment to the Basin Plan. Efforts to solicit public review and comment include at least fifteen workshops held between January 1999 and February 2002; at least two presentations at the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council, public notification 45 days preceding the Board hearing; and responses from the Regional Board staff to oral and written comments received from the public.
12. The amendment is consistent with the State Antidegradation Policy (State Board Resolution No. 89-16), in that the changes to water quality objectives (i) consider maximum benefits to the people of the state, (ii) will not unreasonably affect present

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and anticipated beneficial use of waters, and (iii) will not result in water quality less than that prescribed in policies. Likewise, the amendment is consistent with the federal Antidegradation Policy (40 CFR 131.12).

13. The basin planning process has been certified as functionally equivalent to the California Environmental Quality Act requirements for preparing environmental documents and is, therefore, exempt from those requirements (Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.), and the required environmental documentation and CEQA environmental checklist have been prepared.
14. The proposed amendment results in no potential for adverse effect (de minimis finding), either individually or cumulatively, on wildlife.
15. The regulatory action meets the “Necessity” standard of the Administrative Procedures Act, Government Code, section 11353, subdivision (b).
16. The Basin Plan amendment incorporating a TMDL for nitrogen and related effects in the Los Angeles River must be submitted for review and approval by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board), the State Office of Administrative Law (OAL), and the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The Basin Plan amendment will become effective upon approval by OAL and USEPA. A Notice of Decision will be filed.

**THEREFORE, be it resolved that pursuant to Section 13240 and 13242 of the Water Code, the Regional Board hereby amends the Basin Plan as follows:**

1. Pursuant to sections 13240 and 13242 of the California Water Code, the Regional Board, after considering the entire record, including oral testimony at the hearing, hereby adopts the amendment to Chapter 7 the Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region to incorporate the elements of the Los Angeles River Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects TMDL as set forth in Attachment A hereto.
2. The Executive Officer is directed to forward copies of the Basin Plan amendment to the SWRCB in accordance with the requirements of section 13245 of the California Water Code.
3. The Regional Board requests that the SWRCB approve the Basin Plan amendment in accordance with the requirements of sections 13245 and 13246 of the California Water Code and forward it to OAL and the U.S. EPA.
4. If during its approval process the SWRCB or OAL determines that minor, non-substantive corrections to the language of the amendment are needed for clarity or consistency, the Executive Officer may make such changes, and shall inform the Board of any such changes.

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5. The Executive Officer is authorized to sign a Certificate of Fee Exemption.
6. Amend the text in the Basin Plan, Plans and Policies (Chapter 5) to add:

"Resolution No. 03-XXX. Adopted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board on July 10, 2003.

'Amendment to include a TMDL for Nitrogen and Related Effects for the Los Angeles River'

The resolution proposes a TMDL for Nitrogen and Related Effects in the Los Angeles River."

7. The Basin Plan amendment set forth in Attachment A shall only become effective if the water quality objectives revised by Regional Board Resolution 2002-011, or equivalent water quality objectives, have been approved by the OAL and USEPA, and are consistent with the TMDL.

I, Dennis A. Dickerson, Executive Officer, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region, on July 10, 2003.

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Dennis A. Dickerson  
Executive Officer

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**Attachment A to Resolution No. 03-XX**

**Proposed Amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan – Los Angeles Region**

**to Incorporate the**

**Los Angeles River Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects TMDL**

Proposed for adoption by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region on July 10, 2003.

**Amendments**

**Table of Contents**

Add:

Chapter 7. Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)

7-8. Los Angeles River Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects TMDL

**List of Figures, Tables, and Inserts**

Add:

Chapter 7. Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)

Tables

7-8. Los Angeles River Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects TMDL

7-8.1 Los Angeles River Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects TMDL:  
Elements

7-8.2. Los Angeles River Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects TMDL:  
Implementation Schedule

**Chapter 7. Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)**

**Los Angeles River Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects TMDL**

This TMDL was adopted by:

The Regional Water Quality Control Board on [Insert Date].

This TMDL was approved by:

The State Water Resources Control Board on [Insert Date].

The Office of Administrative Law on [Insert Date].

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on [Insert Date].

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**Table 7-8.1. LOS ANGELES RIVER NITROGEN COMPOUNDS AND RELATED EFFECTS TMDL: Elements**

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<b>Element</b>	<b>Los Angeles River Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects TMDL</b>																																								
<b>Problem Statement</b>	<p>Discharge of nutrients to the Los Angeles River, including ammonia, nitrite and nitrate, are causing exceedances of water quality objectives established in the <i>Basin Plan</i> for these compounds and impairments of recreation, and warm freshwater and wildlife habitats beneficial uses of the Los Angeles River. Additionally, the effects of excess nitrogen, such as algae, low dissolved oxygen, and odors and scums also impair the beneficial uses of the Los Angeles River. Ammonia, nutrients, and related effects are included on the 303(d) list as impairing various reaches of the Los Angeles River.</p>																																								
<b>Numeric Target</b> <i>(Interpretation of the numeric water quality objective, used to calculate the load allocations)</i>	<p>Numeric targets for this TMDL are listed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Total ammonia as nitrogen (NH<sub>3</sub>-N)                      Numeric targets are dependent on temperature and pH of receiving water. Based on the last two years of temperature and pH data, the ammonia numeric targets for the major POTWs are provided below                     <table style="margin-left: 40px;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"><i>POTWs</i></th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"><i>One-hour average</i></th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"><i>Thirty-day average</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Donald C. Tillman WRP</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">4.7 mg/L</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">1.6 mg/L</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Los Angeles-Glendale WRP</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">8.7 mg/L</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">2.4 mg/L</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Burbank WRP</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">10.1 mg/L</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">2.3 mg/L</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </li> <li>b) Nitrate-nitrogen and nitrite-nitrogen                     <table style="margin-left: 40px;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"><i>Constituent</i></th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"><i>Thirty-day average</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Nitrate-nitrogen (NO<sub>3</sub>-N)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">8 mg/L</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Nitrite-nitrogen (NO<sub>2</sub>-N)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">1 mg/L</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Nitrate-nitrogen plus nitrite-nitrogen (NO<sub>3</sub>-N + NO<sub>2</sub>-N)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">8 mg/L</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </li> </ul>	<i>POTWs</i>		<i>One-hour average</i>		<i>Thirty-day average</i>		Donald C. Tillman WRP		4.7 mg/L		1.6 mg/L		Los Angeles-Glendale WRP		8.7 mg/L		2.4 mg/L		Burbank WRP		10.1 mg/L		2.3 mg/L		<i>Constituent</i>		<i>Thirty-day average</i>		Nitrate-nitrogen (NO <sub>3</sub> -N)		8 mg/L		Nitrite-nitrogen (NO <sub>2</sub> -N)		1 mg/L		Nitrate-nitrogen plus nitrite-nitrogen (NO <sub>3</sub> -N + NO <sub>2</sub> -N)		8 mg/L	
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<b>Element</b>	<b>Los Angeles River Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects TMDL</b>												
	<p>Numeric targets to address narrative objectives required to protect warm freshwater and wildlife habitats are intended to implement the narrative objectives and may be revised based on the results of monitoring and studies conducted pursuant to the implementation plan.</p>												
<b>Source Analysis</b>	<p>The principal source of ammonia and nitrogen compounds to the Los Angeles River is discharges from the Donald C. Tillman Water Reclamation Plant (WRP), the Los Angeles-Glendale WRP, and the Burbank WRP. During dry weather period, the major POTWs contribute 84.1% of the total dry weather nitrogen load. Dry weather urban runoff, stormwater, and groundwater discharge may also contribute nitrate loads. Further evaluation of these sources is set forth in the Implementation Plan.</p>												
<b>Linkage Analysis</b>	<p>Linkage between nutrient sources and the instream water quality was established through hydrodynamic and water quality models. The Environmental Fluid Dynamics Code 1-D was used to model the hydrodynamic characteristics of the Los Angeles River and the Water Quality Analysis Simulation Program was used to model water quality. Additional studies were conducted to develop the residence time and determine the nutrient uptake rates by algae.</p>												
<b>Wasteload Allocations (for point sources)</b>	<p>1. Major point sources:</p> <p>Concentration-based wasteloads are allocated to major point sources of ammonia and nitrogen compounds to the Los Angeles River, which include the Donald C. Tillman WRP, the Los Angeles-Glendale WRP, and the Burbank WRP. Based on the last two years of temperature and pH data, the ammonia WLAs for the major POTWs are provided below. The implementation plan provides reconsideration of the WLAs by the Regional Board based on WER studies and updated data three years after the effective date of the TMDL.</p> <p>a) Total ammonia as nitrogen (NH<sub>3</sub>-N):</p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;"><i>POTW</i></th> </tr> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;"><i>One-hour average WLA</i></th> </tr> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;"><i>Thirty-day average WLA</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Donald C. Tillman WRP</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4.7 mg/L</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1.6 mg/L</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Los Angeles-Glendale WRP</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">8.7 mg/L</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2.4 mg/L</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Burbank WRP</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">10.1 mg/L</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2.3 mg/L</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<i>POTW</i>	<i>One-hour average WLA</i>	<i>Thirty-day average WLA</i>	Donald C. Tillman WRP	4.7 mg/L	1.6 mg/L	Los Angeles-Glendale WRP	8.7 mg/L	2.4 mg/L	Burbank WRP	10.1 mg/L	2.3 mg/L
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Element	Los Angeles River Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects TMDL
	<p>b) Nitrate-nitrogen (NO<sub>3</sub>-N), nitrite-nitrogen (NO<sub>2</sub>-N), and Nitrate-nitrogen plus nitrite-nitrogen (NO<sub>3</sub>-N + NO<sub>2</sub>-N):</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Constituent</i> <i>Wasteload allocation</i></p> <p>NO<sub>3</sub>-N 6.4 mg/L</p> <p>NO<sub>2</sub>-N 0.8 mg/L</p> <p>NO<sub>3</sub>-N + NO<sub>2</sub>-N 6.4 mg/L</p> <p>2. <u>Minor point sources:</u></p> <p>Waste loads are allocated to minor discharges enrolled under NPDES or WDR permits including but not limited to Tapia WRP, Whittier Narrows WRP, Los Angeles Zoo WRP, industrial and construction stormwater, and municipal storm water and urban runoff from municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s):</p> <p>a) Ammonia wasteload allocations (WLAs) for minor point sources are listed below:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Water Body</i> <i>One-hour average WLA</i> <i>Thirty-day average WLA</i></p> <p>Los Angeles River above LAG 4.7 mg/L 1.6 mg/L</p> <p>Los Angeles River below LAG 8.7 mg/L 2.4 mg/L</p> <p>Los Angeles Tributaries 10.1 mg/L 2.3 mg/L</p> <p>b) WLAs for nitrate-nitrogen, nitrite-nitrogen, and nitrate-nitrogen plus nitrite-nitrogen for minor discharges are listed below:</p> <p>NO<sub>3</sub>-N 8.0 mg/L</p> <p>NO<sub>2</sub>-N 1.0 mg/L</p> <p>NO<sub>3</sub>-N + NO<sub>2</sub>-N 8.0 mg/L</p>

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<b>Element</b>	<b>Los Angeles River Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects TMDL</b>
<b>Load Allocation</b> <i>(for nonpoint sources)</i>	The Source Assessment indicates that nitrogen loads from nonpoint sources are insignificant. Consequently, load allocations will not be developed at this time. Load allocations may be developed if it is determined they are necessary after load reductions are effected through implementation of the waste load allocations. Additional monitoring is included in the implementation plan to verify the nitrogen nonpoint source contributions.
<b>Implementation</b>	<p>1. Refer to Table 7-8.2</p> <p>2. The Implementation Plan includes upgrades to the WRPs discharging to Los Angeles River for removal of ammonia, nitrate, and nitrite. To allow time for completion of the nitrification/denitrification facilities which are integral to this TMDL, the amendment to the Basin Plan made by this TMDL allows for higher interim loads which translate as interim effluent limits for a period not to exceed three years from the effective date of the TMDL (at the discretion of the Regional Board). The following interim limits will apply to NH<sub>3</sub>-N + NO<sub>3</sub>-N + NO<sub>2</sub>-N. Effluent limits for the individual compounds NH<sub>3</sub>-N, NO<sub>3</sub>-N, and NO<sub>2</sub>-N are not required during the interim period.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u><i>Interim Limits* for NH<sub>3</sub>-N + NO<sub>3</sub>-N + NO<sub>2</sub>-N</i></u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>POTW</i> <i>Daily Maximum*</i> <i>Monthly Average*</i></p> <p>Donald C. Tillman WRP 23.7 mg/L 22.8 mg/L</p> <p>Los Angeles-Glendale WRP 20.3 mg/L 18.11 mg/L</p> <p>Burbank WRP 25.1 mg/L 24.0 mg/L</p> <p>*The monthly average and daily maximum interim limits are based on the 95<sup>th</sup> and 99<sup>th</sup> percentiles of effluent performance data reported by dischargers.</p> <p>3. The Implementation Plan also includes additional studies to evaluate the effectiveness of nitrogen reductions on related effects such as algae growth, depressed oxygen, odors and scum. Ammonia and nitrate reductions will be regulated through effluent limits prescribed in NPDES permits.</p>
<b>Margin of Safety</b>	An explicit margin of safety of 20% of the nitrate and nitrite loads is allocated to address uncertainty in the source and linkage analyses. In addition, an implicit margin of safety is incorporated through conservative model

<b>Element</b>	<b>Los Angeles River Nitrogen Compounds and Related Effects TMDL</b>
	assumptions and statistical analysis. Impairment is typically based on exceeding the single sample objective in more than 10% of the samples. By incorporating an implicit margin of safety, the number of samples exceeding the water quality objective will be less than 10% of the samples measured in-stream.
<i>Seasonal Variations and Critical Conditions</i>	The critical condition identified for this TMDL is based on the low flow condition defined as the 7Q10. <sup>1</sup> The driest six months of the year are the first critical condition for nutrients because less surface flow is available to dilute effluent discharge.

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<sup>1</sup> 7Q10 means the lowest consecutive seven-day flow in a ten-year period.

**Table 7-8.2. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE**

Implementation Tasks	Completion Date
1. Apply interim limits for $\text{NH}_3\text{-N} + \text{NO}_3\text{-N} + \text{NO}_2\text{-N}$ to major Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs). 2. Apply Waste Load Allocations (WLAs) to minor point source dischargers and MS4 permittees. 3. Include monitoring for nitrogen compounds in NPDES permits for minor NPDES dischargers above 0.1 mgd as permits are renewed.	Effective Date of TMDL
4. Submittal of a Workplan by Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permittees to evaluate nutrient loadings associated with runoff loads in the watershed, including residential, commercial, and industrial land uses and other sources for approval by the Executive Officer of the Regional Board. The monitoring program shall assess dry weather discharges from urban and open space sources. A key objective of these studies will be to determine the effectiveness of BMPs in addressing nutrient loading in runoff from residential areas.	1 year after the Effective Date of TMDL
5. Submittal of a Workplan by major NPDES permittees to evaluate the effectiveness of nitrogen reductions on removing impairments from algae odors, scums, and pH for approval by the Executive Officer of the Regional Board. The monitoring program will include instream monitoring of algae, foam, scum, odors in the Los Angeles River. A key objective of these studies will be to determine the effectiveness of nitrogen reductions on removing impairments related to algae, foam, odor, scum and pH. In addition, groundwater discharge to Los Angeles River will also be analyzed for nutrients to determine the magnitude of these loadings and the need for load allocations. Flow and analytical data for nutrients will be required to estimate loadings from non-point sources	1 year after the Effective Date of TMDL
6. Submission of a special studies Workplan by the City of Los Angeles to evaluate site-specific objectives for ammonia, nitrate, and nitrite, including the following issues: pH and temperature distribution downstream of the D.C. Tillman WRP to determine the point of compliance for ammonia, establishment of ammonia WLAs based on seasonality, and revision of the water quality objectives for nitrate and nitrite based on averaging of the numeric objective.	1 years after Effective Date of TMDL
7. Submission of results from water effects ratio study for ammonia and special studies by the City of Los Angeles including pH and temperature distribution downstream of D.C. Tillman WRP.	2.5 years after Effective Date of TMDL.
8. Regional Board considers site-specific objective for ammonia, nitrate, nitrite and nitrite + nitrate and revision of wasteload allocations based on results from Tasks 5, 6 and 7.	3 years after Effective Date of TMDL.
9. Interim limits for ammonia + nitrate + nitrite expire and WLAs for ammonia, nitrate, nitrite, and nitrate + nitrite apply to POTWs.	3 years after Effective Date of TMDL
10. Complete evaluation of monitoring for nutrient effects and determine need for revising wasteload allocations.	5 years after Effective Date of TMDL
11. Regional Board considers results of Task 10 and revises WLAs as appropriate.	6 years after Effective Date of TMDL

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